preceding his departure there was friction between Bonaparte and the Directory. It is said that in one of their sessions, called to consider the situation, Bonaparte proposed to reknit the negotiations of Rastadt by himself returning thither, but that Francois was designated to go in his stead. Thereupon the worn-out scene of threatening resignation was rehearsed by him once more. "Here is a pen/3 said Rewbell; "you need rest." But Merlin snatched it; and as the furious aspirant, seeing his supremacy jeopardized, left the room, the others heard the words, "The pear is not yet ripe." "Believe me, it is good advice I give you," said Barras, in a private interview immediately after: "leave the country as soon as you can." There was abundant room for such scenes in a committee which considered as its own the policy of indirect attack on England through the East, while all its members were chafing under the dictatorial presence of an embodied and dissatisfied ambition which Talleyrand declares had really devised the scheme, but was now uncertain as to which was the best to take of not two or three, but half a dozen courses. The cast of the die decided for Egypt. The secrecy of preparation had kept even the French in doubt. England for a time was entirely misled, and made the nearly fatal blunder of concentrating her naval force in the Channel, and of guarding the entrance to the Mediterranean with only the few ships she could spare, while on the waters of that sea itself she had virtually no force. Meantime the great fleet at Toulon, nearly the equal of any which France had ever launched, was entirely ready. To convoy the four hundred overloaded transports, there were fifteen ships of the line, fifteen frigates, seven corvettes, and thirty minor armed vessels. It was a surprise even to the initiated that at the last moment the soldiers were found to number not twenty-five thousand,